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RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4564  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3204  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7707  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1790  
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Syria/Italy, Nahr al-Bared, International Tribunal, Golan,  
Iraq (6/5)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on June 5 reported the June 4 arrival in  
Damascus of Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister  
Massimo D'Alema who will hold talks with senior Syrian officials on  
bilateral relations and regional issues.

As for developments in Lebanon, papers reported continuing fierce  
clashes in Nahr al-Bared, tension in the refugee camp of Ein  
el-Hilweh in Sidon, southern Lebanon, and the explosion that took  
place in Sad al-Bushiriyeh in northeastern Beirut. Papers also  
reported that Lebanese MP Mustafa Hussein has withdrawn from  
al-Mustaqbal Bloc in rejection of the US plots against Lebanon.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Masimo Dalima  
arrives in Damascus. Dalima: Syria plays a positive role in the  
region; we maintain excellent relations with Syria"  
(Government-owned Tishreen, 6/5)

"Tension prevails in Nahr al-Bared and Ein el-Hilweh refugee camps.  
An explosion in Sad al-Bushiriyeh in northeastern Beirut. Former  
Lebanese Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss: America prevents accord  
among the Lebanese people" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/5)

"Lebanese MP Mustafa Hussein withdraws from al-Mustaqbal Bloc in  
rejection of the US plots against Lebanon" (Government-owned  
Tishreen, 6/5)

"Amnesty International: Israel drowns Palestinians in poverty and  
misery" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/5)

"Cheney created mercenaries in Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen,  
6/5)

¶3. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"Modern Setbacks"

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Abd-al-Fattah al-Awad, Chief Editor of government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/5): "Why is Syria the target of hatred...? The fact is that Syria has not accepted the roles that others designed for it. It has always been eager to have its own role, a Syrian role that helps formulate other roles, not only play them. The Syrian decision-maker, furthermore, never allowed the sovereignty and dignity of Syria -- people and country -- to be harmed.

"Within this context we can explain the political whoredom and attempts to bargain over Syria's role and to usurp Syria's right to preserve its dignity and sovereignty....

"Despite offers to give the Golan back to Syria in return for Syria's abandonment of its role in supporting the Palestinian cause and regaining Arab rights, and despite the 'stabs' that Syria has received secretly and in the dark, it has insisted that the return of the Golan in full be a Syrian right not open for bargaining or deal-making. Forty years after the occupation of the Golan, we find ourselves more determined to regain it in full.

"Syria has announced its readiness for peace, but we are completely sure that Israel is neither willing nor able to achieve it...."

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"Anti-Syria Media"

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Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/5): "The so-called 'moderate' Arab media outlets lack credibility and adopt Israeli concepts, terminology, and

interpretations....

"For example, these outlets try to absolve Israel of the systematic killing of Palestinians when they claim that Palestinians never stop firing missiles at Israeli towns, although the fact is that Palestinians are trying to defend themselves by using the most basic means available to them....

"These Arab media outlets sometimes talk about Arab resistance and opposition with a kind of disdain, focusing on Syria, which refuses to surrender to the American-Israeli plan in the region, and on Lebanon's Hizbollah, which liberated most of south Lebanon from the Israeli occupation and inflicted a solid defeat on the Israeli occupation army in the July/August 2006 aggression.

"When these cheap and subservient media outlets talk about Syria, the timing is often mean, the words provocative, and the objective closely linked to what is happening on the ground, from Palestine to Iraq to Lebanon....

"But these media outlets, which receive enormous funding to play this subversive role, cannot harm Damascus and its status.

"Syria has remarkable Arab, regional, and international support. Everyone returns to it on every matter related to the region. Superpowers have tried to isolate Syria to please Israel but have failed and have returned to talk with it on equal footing....

"Let them say what they will. The day will come when their words, falsehoods, and poison backfire."

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"What Comes After Chapter Seven?"

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Ibrahim Darraji, an editorialist in independent al-Watan, wrote (6/5): "There are a number of scenarios regarding the results of investigations into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and the work of the International Tribunal that will be formed under Security Council Resolution 1757. One of the possibilities is to politicize the case fully and accuse official Syrian figures of involvement in the assassination. In

this case, Syria must handle the matter calmly and wisely and not feel content with mere rejection and denial.

"Syria, in this case, must decide to try the suspects before the Syrian judiciary.... The Charter of the International Criminal Court as well as Paragraph 2 of Article 6 of Al-Hariri Tribunal itself allow this, provided that the national trial is fair....

"Syria will have no problem here as long as we are confident that we are innocent. Then we commit ourselves to holding trials based on international judicial standards and leave it to our national judiciary to decide on conviction or acquittal.... This way Syria will be carrying out its duty and not giving others an excuse to target it on the pretext of lack of cooperation. Such a Syrian step would also help our friends at the Security Council defend our position and underline our commitment, especially since the imposition of penalties on the pretext of lack of cooperation would require a return to the Security Council for a new vote."

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"The Inevitable End"

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Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/5): "President Bush's administration does not appear willing to put an end to the mad, bloody, destructive war it is waging in Iraq, despite the mounting American losses and the talk about reducing the troops by 50 percent and conducting a review in September....

"President Bush wants to continue the war until complete defeat and to the last American soldier in Iraq.... The increasing American losses mean that the defeat of the American Army will be the inevitable end of the hateful occupation unless a miracle happens and saves what is left of this army through a speedy withdrawal or based on a short timetable."

Corbin